

18 February 2020

Equity Trustees reveals 2019 a record year for giving

Australia's leading trustee company, Equity Trustees, today released its Annual Giving Review which revealed that the 2019 financial year was a record-breaking year of giving, distributing \$124 million to the community – making Equity Trustees the most significant single trustee source of philanthropic funding in the country for that year.

"It was an extraordinary year and a record for Equity Trustees which is a promising indicator that a culture of philanthropy is growing in Australia," said Mick O'Brien, Managing Director of Equity Trustees.

"It is rare the value and importance of trust structures can be highlighted – but recent discussion about where and how bushfire donations are managed shows that when designed correctly, generosity can be directed just where donors intend it to go. It is an honour to be chosen to steward a legacy into the future and take responsibility to ensure a lasting and positive impact in our community," he explained.

In the previous financial year, the distributions reported in the 2018 Annual Giving Review totalled \$87 million.

"The 2019 financial year was distinguished by an increase in grants from charitable trusts from \$76 million to \$79million, coupled with an unusually large year of bequests from estates and trusts via wills – from \$11 million to \$45 million in this reporting period," Mr O'Brien said.

General Manager of Charitable Trusts and Philanthropy, Jodi Kennedy, said that while the way money was being spread across the country, and by cause, was fairly stable, there were changes in how the team have been granting the money.

"We're working closely with the for-purpose sector and taking their advice on where money needs to be directed to get real and sustainable change in addressing long term social issues. That has meant we've looked at where we can direct larger, or more ongoing funding commitments over years and with a particular emphasis on helping to build the capacity of the sector. So, whether it is in our focus areas of medical health and research, young people or the environment – there is the ability to measure and maximise the positive outcomes of the funding," she said.

"As a leading provider of charitable funds in Australia, we want to be much more than just responsible stewards of these funds – we really want to raise the bar around the responsibility we have as a large-scale funder."

Ms Kennedy said there were two noticeable trends in compiling the data over the past two years. They were evident in the group of active philanthropy clients – people who are engaged in structuring their philanthropy during their lifetime, rather than directing it via their Will to a one-off bequest or trust to support particularly causes or charities.

"One trend we are seeing is the increasing intergenerational involvement in philanthropy – that is, grandparents or parents actively engaging their children in their philanthropic fund, educating them around the strategic intent of their giving and encouraging them to be involved more formally," she said.

"Some of these younger generations are coming through their parents or grandparent's involvement, and we are also seeing clients from the Next-Gen who are part of a new breed of self-made tech innovators or social enterprise entrepreneurs", Ms Kennedy said.

"What we're hearing from younger philanthropists is that they are more inclined to lean towards supporting initiatives that are focussed on environmental sustainability or climate change mitigation.



There is a deep concern about animals, environment and humanitarian issues driven by climate change. This is a shift away from areas that have historically attracted the most funding.”

The 2019 Annual Giving Review analyses the giving data from the 2019 financial year from more than 650 charitable trusts, and bequests from clients of Equity Trustees. It includes stories about projects and programs funded in that period and is [available online](#) from 18 February 2020.

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Equity Trustees was established in 1888 for the purpose of providing independent and impartial Trustee and Executor services to help families throughout Australia protect their wealth. As Australia’s leading specialist trustee company, we offer a diverse range of services to individuals, families and corporate clients including asset management, estate planning, philanthropic services and Responsible Entity (RE) services for external Fund Managers.

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